DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 764 CE 037 806

TITLE The New York State Board of Regents Project on Long-Range Goals and Policy Directions for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. A Discussion Paper.
INSTITUTION New York State Education Dept., Albany. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
PUB DATE Nov 83
NOTE 36p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Agency Role; Change Strategies; Cooperative Programs; *Disabilities; Economic Development; Educational Change; Educational Improvement; Educational Legislation; *Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Policy; Educational Trends; Federal Legislation; Futures (of Society); Long Range Planning; Needs Assessment; Policy Formation; Position Papers; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Program Improvement; Rehabilitation Programs; School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; State Agencies; State Boards of Education; State Programs; *Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation
IDENTIFIERS *New York; Private Sector

ABSTRACT

The New York State Board of Regents conducted a formal review of the long-range goals and policy directions for vocational rehabilitative services to disabled youth and adults in New York. The first phase of the review consisted of an examination of major pieces of vocational and special education legislation, current federal and state economic conditions, and emerging trends in the area of vocational rehabilitation. Based on this examination, the project staff recommended that rehabilitative services planners and policymakers reaffirm the state commitment to the provision of a full range of rehabilitative services through the provision of adequate public funds. Also cited by the project staff was the need for a formal delineation of the role of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the specific vocational nature of its services. It was further recommended that the providers of vocational rehabilitative services expand their ties to business, industry, and labor to support economic development in New York State; increase the participation of the private and volunteer sectors in a broad-based state-managed service delivery system; integrate the needs of disabled persons in services delivered by other offices in the State Education Department; help disabled persons become better able to meet future employment openings by expanding knowledge of employment trends and by providing supportive services that address those trends; and provide more independent living services. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED237764

THE NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF REGENTS PROJECT ON LONG-RANGE GOALS AND POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A Discussion Paper

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, or sex in the educational programs and activities which it operates. This policy is in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Inquiries concerning this policy may be referred to the Department's Affirmative Action Officer, Education Building, Albany, New York 12234.

CE037806

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

The University Of The State Of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Albany, New York 12234
November 1983

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R T Trombley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

NEW YORK
1784 1984
THE STATE OF LEARNING

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
Regents of The University (with years when terms expire)

1988 Willard A. Genrich, Chancellor, LL.B., L.H.D., LL.D., Litt.D., D.C.S., D.C.L., Sc.D. - Buffalo

1987 Martin C. Barell, Vice Chancellor, B.A., I.A., LL.B., LL.D. - - - - - - Muttontown

1986 Kenneth B. Clark, A.B., M.S., Ph.D., LL.D., L.H.D., D.Sc. - - - - - - Hastings on Hudson

1989 Emlyn I. Griffith, A.B., J.D. - Rome

1984 Jorge L. Batista, B.A., J.D., LL.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Bronx

1986 Laura Bradley Chodos, B.A., M.A.- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Vischer Ferry

1984 Louise P. Matteoni, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Bayside

1988 J. Edward Meyer, B.A., LL.B., L.H.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Chappaqua

1987 R. Carlos Carballada, B.S., L.H.D.- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Rochester

1988 Floyd S. Linton, A.B., M.A., M.P.A., D.C.L.- - - - - - - - - - - - - Miller Place

1988 Salvatore J. Sclafani, B.S., M.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Staten Island

1989 Mimi Lieber, B.A., M.A. - Manhattan

1985 Shirley C. Brown, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Albany

1990 Robert M. Best, B.S.- Binghamton

1990 Norma Gluck, B.A., M.S.W.- Manhattan

1990 Thomas R. Frey, A.B., LL.B. - Rochester

President of The University and Commissioner of Education
Gordon M. Ambach

Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education
Robert J. Maurer

Acting Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Rehabilitation
Richard M. Switzer

FOREWORD

The New York State Board of Regents was founded in 1784, and next year the Regents will be observing a 200th anniversary. The Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education have established as a major objective for the bicentennial year activities which are intended to focus attention on planning for the next twenty years.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is one of four major offices in the State Education Department. In order to address future-year planning for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Board of Regents in cooperation with the Commissioner of Education's Advisory Council for Vocational Rehabilitation has initiated a project to formally identify and document long-range goals and policy directions for vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.

This paper was developed by Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff in consultation with a seven-member subcommittee of the Commissioner's Advisory Council for Vocational Rehabilitation. This subcommittee was chaired by Paul Hearne, also Chairman of the Advisory Council, and included the following individuals: Jack Clarcq, Milton Goldstein, Patricia Livingston, Edwin Martin, Alfred Miller, and David Reynolds. This paper will be used as a discussion document to solicit reactions from individuals and organizations who have an interest in vocational rehabilitation. A number of meetings will be held throughout the State to provide an opportunity for review and discussion of the paper. The Regents and the Advisory Council encourage and will welcome substantial participation by those who receive services as well as those who provide services. All comments, reactions and suggestions will be fully considered in the development of long-range goals and policy directions for vocational rehabilitation services.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	FOREWORD	vii
I.	PURPOSE OF THE REGENTS PROJECT	1
II.	MISSION STATEMENT OF THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	5
III.	MAJOR ISSUES - PROPOSED GOALS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	7
IV.	SUMMARY	30

I. PURPOSE OF THE REGENTS PROJECT

The New York State Board of Regents has broad responsibility for establishing educational policy and goals which include education of all disabled children. The Board of Regents is also responsible for policy direction and goal formulation for vocational rehabilitation services for disabled youth and adults. In light of current high rates of unemployment in the nation and in the State, and the considerable constraints on resources, the Board of Regents will review long-range goals and policy directions for vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. The need for a formal review at this time is predicated on a number of factors, several of which have been identified below. It is the intent of the Regents and the Advisory Council that these factors and their impact will be fully assessed over the course of the project in order to establish long-range goals and policy directions for the future.

Past Trends

1. Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This legislation established a firm national commitment to the elimination of discrimination based solely upon an individual's handicapping condition, and it provided direction for fostering full recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities. It also reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to provide leadership and funding through the federal/state vocational rehabilitation program to assist individuals whose disabilities result in substantial handicaps to employment, and for whom a reasonable probability exists that vocational rehabilitation services will improve their employability. Over the past 10 years, this Act has substantially increased society's awareness of the needs of disabled persons, and has led to many efforts in both the public and private sector to address those needs. The identification of underserved populations (e.g., persons with limited English proficiency, learning disabled, older disabled persons and deaf or hearing impaired individuals) and the initiation of independent living services have emerged and also have had an impact on the future activities of the State vocational rehabilitation program.

2. Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1973. This legislation extended to all handicapped children the fundamental right of a free appropriate public education. It guaranteed a number of rights to handicapped children and their parents, and has led to implementation of procedural safeguards to insure those rights. This legislation has had a major impact in improving the quality and quantity of educational opportunities for handicapped children. As with the Rehabilitation Act, this Act has further increased society's awareness of the needs of disabled persons, and has fostered increased interaction of handicapped and non-handicapped children during their formative years. The provision of transitional services from the academic world to appropriate employment must expand in scope and variety if the State program is to address the needs of this expanded population of handicapped students.

3. Deinstitutionalization. During the period of broad social legislation on the national level, the State of New York was simultaneously pursuing a policy of deinstitutionalizing its large psychiatric hospitals and developmental centers, and establishing as an alternative, a system of community-based support services and programs. From an inpatient population of nearly 112,000 during the 1960's, there are approximately 32,000 mentally disabled individuals now residing in State institutions for a total decrease of approximately 80,000 individuals. While some of this decrease includes deaths that occurred among inpatients during this period, the reduction also reflects the extent of New York State's efforts to treat the mentally ill and mentally retarded in community alternatives. The State program must reexamine the nature of the vocational programs which it provides and its methods of referrals in order to assure that the population shifted to the community can also be adequately served by the rehabilitation facilities and programs available at the local level.

Current Factors

1. Federal. In spite of considerable financial problems in the national economy and a general consolidation and reduction of social programs, the Congress and the President reaffirmed the federal commitment to a program of vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. Efforts to consolidate vocational rehabilitation programs with social welfare programs and efforts to substantially reduce funding were rejected. The FY 83 and FY 84 budgets for Vocational Rehabilitation were passed by the Congress and signed by the President, and provided modest increases in funding of the basic state grant program.

2. State. Problems in the national economy which are usually exacerbated in New York State because it is a highly industrialized and energy-dependent state have led to record levels of unemployment in many regions of the state. The recent recession has resulted in a serious shortfall of anticipated tax revenues, which coupled with resources needed for legitimate social needs, will force the State's Executive Branch and Legislature to make painful choices among reduced services, increased taxes or some combination of both. The problems in the economy with its associated high unemployment and potential cutbacks in services substantially impact on the State's disabled population, particularly in terms of opportunities for productive employment.

Emerging Trends

1. Employment and Training Needs. There is little question that the labor market is experiencing profound changes. Occupations once in high demand are on the decline as technological advances occur at an increasing rate. Skill training programs must increasingly reflect the employability needs of the future, not the past. Professionals and concerned groups must assure that the employability needs of youth and adults with disabilities are fully considered as new programs emerge. A study of labor market needs as they specifically affect disabled persons should be conducted in order to plan realistic training for disabled workers.

2. Educational Upgrading and Employment Retraining. New labor market demands will dictate that additional education and employment retraining opportunities be made available for occupational skills to maintain employment. Special efforts will be required for dislocated workers as specific industries or occupations decline or relocate from New York State. Disabled individuals currently employed will be affected, as are all other workers, and provisions must be made that special needs related to disability are included in overall plans, including the specific needs as they affect persons who are members of racial, ethnic or linguistic minority groups.

3. Partnership of Government with Business and Industry. Emerging patterns suggest a strengthening of cooperative efforts among governmental entities and private employers in addressing complex economic and social issues. Within the rehabilitation community, special efforts are underway to assist employers in meeting the needs of disabled persons in the work environment. A high priority is to provide assistance to both an employee and an employer when a disability occurs on the job. Forward

planning should fully recognize successful public/private cooperative efforts, and provide orderly expansion when it is in the public interest.

4. Clarification of Responsibility. Effective public policy requires clear statements of authority and responsibility to insure consistent and equitable services for individuals with special needs. Because the needs of disabled persons cut across many standard governmental functions (i.e., education, health, social services, among others), particular attention must be devoted to insuring that services are coordinated to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in an effective and efficient way. Increasing constraints on public resources dictate that maximum efforts be expended on assuring a delivery system that is responsive to individual needs with minimum duplication or overlap in functions, yet which insures an uninterrupted flow of services that disabled individuals may need through life.

The past decade has represented a period of considerable growth in the development of improved programs and services for disabled people. With this immediate past as a base, long-range goals and policy directions must be designed to sustain the growth of the past yet recognizing and planning for, the emerging trends of the future. Section II of this paper defines the mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and provides a framework for subsequent discussion of major issues, proposed goals, and recommendations for action to be addressed within Section III.

II. MISSION OF THE OFFICE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist disabled individuals who have substantial handicaps to employment in achieving economic self-sufficiency and independence. The vocational rehabilitation program pursues program outcomes that benefit both individuals and society as a whole. For individuals, the program seeks identification and assessment of impediments which affect the employability of disabled persons. Through the provision of vocational rehabilitation counseling and services, assistance is provided to disabled people to minimize or eliminate the impact of these barriers on their ability to engage in productive employment and on their ability to live independently. For society as a whole, the vocational rehabilitation program is an investment in human potential and the development of capacities which goes well beyond fundamental societal commitments to care and custody of persons with disabilities, or to social services for the economically disadvantaged. Societal expectations dictate that taxpayer dollars devoted to vocational rehabilitation be used cost-effectively with program expenditures being weighed against economic gains for society as a whole in terms of both increased revenues from taxes and reductions in future dependence on social services.

To achieve its mission, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation supports and promotes initiatives in both the private and public sectors of society. In cooperation with business, industry, the voluntary sector and government, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation activities contribute to economic and job development in the State. Expansion of employment opportunities for disabled persons is pursued by strengthening skills and capabilities of individuals, and by working with employers to match qualified workers with available job openings. Functional limitations of disabled persons are fully considered in developing vocational goals and in assisting individuals in meeting employment requirements within specific occupations. Because of its substantial interaction with disabled individuals, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is acutely aware of needs that extend beyond employability and economic self-sufficiency. As a result of disability, individuals often require supportive assistance in the areas of health care, housing, transportation, personal assistance and social services. In cooperation with many agencies and organizations, efforts are directed at both identifying needs of disabled individuals in a comprehensive fashion, and in advocating at the local, state and federal levels for programs and services that effectively meet those needs. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to providing policy advice and assistance to insure that identified needs of persons with disabilities are met.

Vocational rehabilitation services focus on the vocational adjustment of a disabled individual to enable the person to obtain and maintain productive employment. To receive services, an individual must have a physical or mental disability which results in a substantial handicap to employment, and there must be a reasonable expectation that the services may benefit the individual in terms of employability. In discharging its responsibilities, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation relies primarily on the professional skills of vocational rehabilitation counselors with emphasis given to their unique role. The process begins with the identification and assessment of problems related to disability, proceeds through the development of a planned, orderly sequence of services related to the needs of the individual, and concludes with the successful placement of the disabled individual. The vocational rehabilitation counselor, working with the client, attempts to use all available resources in a coordinated way that will lead to achievement of the vocational goal. The primary resource available to any eligible disabled individual is the professional vocational rehabilitation counselor skilled in assessment and evaluation of client needs, provision of counseling directed towards vocational adjustment, and provision of placement and followup assistance in employment. Vocational rehabilitation counselors can assist any eligible individual in obtaining knowledge of, and seeking out, resources and assistance available in a community. Finally, vocational rehabilitation counselors can authorize use of vocational rehabilitation dollars for purchase of services for clients in need, and when such services are deemed necessary to achieve the vocational goal.

III. MAJOR ISSUES - PROPOSED GOALS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The first two sections of this paper have set forth the purpose of the project and the mission statement of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Section III identifies a number of major issues, proposed goals and recommendations for action that have been developed in consultation with the subcommittee of the Advisory Council. By way of introduction, the following paragraphs discuss primary needs of disabled individuals, and ways in which these needs are changing over time.

Needs of the Disabled

Depending upon the specific disability, an individual's primary needs might include some or all of the following:

- Education and training, including acquisition of basic skills and employment competencies;
- Diagnostic vocational evaluation and assessment;
- Career guidance and development;
- Occupational training and retraining;
- Employment counseling and placement;
- Specialized services for non-English-speaking disabled persons;
- Job site modification;
- Home modification;
- Adaptive equipment;
- Tailored information resources (such as "talking" books);
- Health care; and
- Support services including transportation, housing, attendant and home health care, and independent living.

Certain disability-related needs must be met to enable disabled individuals to function in society. For many disabled people, transportation is a major area of need. While in school, transportation services are provided throughout the State to enable access to programs. When the disabled individual leaves school, the lack of transportation becomes a major obstacle in either continuing on to postsecondary training or in obtaining employment. For physically disabled persons who do not have accessible public transportation and for other disabled persons who live where public transportation is minimal or nonexistent,

obtaining transportation can be so expensive as to effectively preclude its availability. For such individuals, employment opportunities are severely constricted or not available. Another critical need for many physically disabled persons is attendant care. For individuals in dependency or without resources, attendant care is provided as a social service. Disabled individuals who are employed must arrange for attendant services through their own means. Much like transportation, attendant services can be so expensive, or generally not available, that an individual cannot access employment opportunities that otherwise might be available.

Additional areas of need relate to new and emerging disability populations. Due to advances in the medical sciences in the care and treatment of many disabling conditions and also due to advances in screening, diagnosis and assessment capabilities, new populations of disabled persons are emerging who in the past received little or no services, or who were considered too severely disabled for vocational services. Improved health care has expanded life expectancy for many disabled people. Specific program services and capabilities must be developed or expanded to adequately address needs which are unique to emerging populations such as the learning disabled, older disabled persons, and developmentally disabled individuals. Steps must be taken to assure the availability of services in languages other than English for individuals who require them.

A major review of public policy related to disability was published in the June, 1983 issue of Scientific American. Authors Gerben DeJong and Raymond Lifchez provide an excellent review of what is known about disability, but their information, as is the case with other studies, point to the need for expansion of research and information on the impact of disability on society. In particular, their data suggest substantial changes in both the prevalence of disability and the composition of the disabled population over the past 10-15 years. By way of example, increased life spans of Americans have increased the probability that an individual will acquire a major disability. Over a recent ten-year period, the authors cite an increase of 66.7 percent in the rate of severe disability in the American population (213 people per 10,000 in 1966 to 355 per 10,000 in 1976). Substantial increases in arthritis and rheumatism have resulted in these becoming the leading cause of disability. While the numbers of individuals affected are fewer (1.5 million to 5 million), the incidence of diabetes increased approximately 300 percent. These statistics and others point to emerging trends in disability which must be more thoroughly assessed and related to social and economic trends. As such, discussion of the following issues should be considered in light of emerging needs identified above, the necessity of strengthening research and the data base in the immediate future, and the need to increase public information and awareness of extent of disability in society.

Issues, Goals and Actions

The activities of the project to date have resulted in the following items for discussion. These items consist of a series of eight major issues affecting rehabilitation of disabled persons. For each major issue, one or more goals have been proposed along with a number of suggestions for action which would accomplish the goal.

ISSUE 1. State Commitment to the Provision of a Full Range of Rehabilitation Services Through the Provision of Adequate Public Funds. Given the continued economic problems and constraints on public resources, a major area of concern is the State's commitment to the provision of a full range of rehabilitation services. For disabled children, both the state and national governments are committed to a policy of a free, appropriate public education with the provision of full services while children are in school. Rehabilitation programs and services should receive funding based on equitability with other programs funded through the State with recognition given to the needs of disabled persons in relationship to the availability of both personal and societal resources. The availability of rehabilitation services should not be predicated on their provision by private or charitable organizations. Current conditions in New York State dictate that difficult choices must be made when allocating scarce resources among compelling and competing needs. Within this environment, substantial efforts must be devoted to insuring that adequate public funds are provided for rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. Within the rehabilitation community, priority attention should be directed to developing an information base that allows for appropriate documentation and verification of the cost-benefits of rehabilitation services. These include increases in tax revenues and reductions in public benefit transfer payments resulting from the rehabilitation process. The information should be widely disseminated to the general public and should be readily available to key executive and legislative leaders as important funding decisions are made. Services and funding must be based on identified needs with a full State commitment to meeting those needs.

GOAL 1.1. **To assure the availability of rehabilitation services for New York's disabled persons, establish a policy and payment system under which the State pays for the appropriate costs of services delivered to vocational rehabilitation clients according to the standards and regulations prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.**

Rationale - Under the New York State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Education Department is required to establish policies that define the scope of services to be made available to eligible disabled clients. In doing so, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation plans, designs and implements delivery systems that involve purchase of services from vendors of rehabilitation services such as rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, doctors, proprietary schools, colleges, and other providers. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation also identifies, approves and audits the costs of these purchased services. It should be encumbent upon the State to pay the costs that the State has identified, approved and audited for service programs that the State has planned, designed and implemented according to approved standards and regulations.

Proposed Actions

1.1a Further develop and refine standards for cost identification for vocational rehabilitation services.

1.1b Establish rate setting principles to meet identified costs.

1.1c Provide adequate funding to pay costs of vocational rehabilitation services.

GOAL 1.2. **To assist public policymakers in planning and allocating public funds by increasing their knowledge and information about both the costs and benefits of rehabilitation services.**

Rationale - As stated in the mission section of this paper, outcomes of the vocational rehabilitation program benefit both individuals and society as a whole. In addition to improving the disabled individual's ability to engage in productive employment and to live independently, the provision of rehabilitation services reduces the need for dependence on social services, increases tax revenues and develops an important source of skilled workers on which employers can draw.

Policymakers on the national, state and local levels should be informed of the contributions in measurable terms that accrue from rehabilitation services. Clear evidence of the positive baiance of benefits to costs will offer substantial justification for committing adequate public funds to this program.

Proposed Actions

1.2a Design and conduct cost/benefit studies of the vocational rehabilitation program in New York State.

1.2b Develop a "marketing" strategy for disseminating cost/benefit information to varied audiences including legislators, the executive branch, other State agencies, consumer groups, and the public.

1.2c Conduct Legislative information workshops.

GOAL 1.3. **To insure that limited resources are used effectively and efficiently in meeting the needs of disabled individuals.**

Rationale - The commitment of adequate public funds for rehabilitation services carries with it the consequent responsibility that the funds be used effectively and efficiently. The purposes and processes for using these funds must, therefore, be clearly defined, implemented and monitored.

Proposed Actions

1.3a Direct funding toward programs with proven successful rates as demonstrated through program evaluation.

1.3b Study administrative and management practices for improving delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

1.3c Consider the fiscal and program impact on disabled persons of other State agency policies.

GOAL 1.4. **To insure that all disabled individuals who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services are informed of the availability of services and are provided appropriate services consistent with their employment needs.**

Rationale - If adequate funding were available, outreach efforts could be extended to all persons with disabling conditions. Groups of disabled individuals who are currently unserved or underserved because of limited resources, could be attracted by the availability of needed services. One such group would include disabled individuals with limited English proficiency. The funding of vocational rehabilitation services would still be provided only after the use of all other available personal, private and/or public resources, but a disabled client's access to appropriate vocational rehabilitation services consistent with their employment needs would not be restricted by funding levels.

Proposed Actions

1.4a Devote increased resources to information dissemination directed towards schools, colleges, hospitals, doctors and other referral sources.

1.4b Streamline the referral systems operating with other state and federal agencies serving disabled persons.

1.4c Experiment with various media to carry the message of the availability of benefits of vocational rehabilitation services.

ISSUE 2. Delineation of the Unique Role of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Specific Vocational Nature of its Services. The vocational rehabilitation program has been in existence for over 60 years. One of the great strengths of the program has been its demonstrated capability in organizing and coordinating a variety of resources that enable individual disabled persons to overcome barriers to employment. Once an individual is deemed eligible for vocational rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation counselors can arrange for, and obtain, a wide variety of services and assistance, specifically intended to result in a successful employment outcome for the individual.

Employment outcomes include competitive employment, sheltered employment, homemaker and self-employment. Within the rehabilitation community, the criteria which govern determinations of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services are well-known. As defined in law, an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if (s)he has a physical or mental disability which for the individual results in a substantial handicap to employment and there is a reasonable expectation that vocational rehabilitation services may benefit the individual in terms of employability. To many outside the rehabilitation community, the fact that vocational rehabilitation services are specifically targeted to employment outcomes is not necessarily well-known nor understood. Unlike a variety of social welfare and direct service programs for dependent populations, vocational rehabilitation is not an entitlement program. Provision of services is based upon an eligibility determination as required by federal law. In light of substantial expansion of community-based programs and services including school-based programs for disabled persons as alternatives to institutionalization, significant issues concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation have arisen. It is becoming increasingly important that efforts be directed at delineating and clarifying the unique role and the specific vocational nature of vocational rehabilitation services in order to reduce potential duplication or service overlap.

A specific area of concern is the relationship of vocational rehabilitation programs and services to related services provided by other State, local and federal agencies. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is but one component in a much larger State system of services for disabled individuals. Over the past decade, new and expanded programs of work activity, day programming and sheltered employment have emerged to meet needs of specific populations, including many who require long-term care and support. At the current time, various funding sources have been used to provide needed services, but difficulties have arisen in insuring a consistency and equitability of services. In delineating the unique role of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in the service delivery system, cooperative efforts must be continued and strengthened with a number of State, local and federal agencies in order to clarify and refine areas of responsibility including the interrelationship of funding sources. Specific obstacles or disincentives to employment must be identified and addressed. It is crucial that every effort be made to insure that effective mechanisms are in place to coordinate the diverse services available in both the public and private sectors. This area of concern has become more critical in recent years due to the combination of shrinking resources and changing needs of the populations.

GOAL 2.1. **To address the employment needs of disabled individuals by emphasizing and exercising the unique role of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in serving persons with disabilities.**

Rationale - Professional vocational rehabilitation counselors are a key element in the rehabilitation service delivery structure. In concert with the client and service providers, the counselor assesses a disabled applicant's vocational potential, determines eligibility, chooses a vocational objective, plans services, monitors the plan's progress, places the client in employment, and follows up after placement. Throughout the process, the counselor provides the client guidance and counseling towards the vocational goal. Although many agencies provide funding for services to disabled persons, only the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, through its vocational rehabilitation counselors, has as its primary mission improving their employability.

Proposed Actions

2.1a Design general and audience specific literature describing Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's mission and how it carries out that mission.

2.1b Publish Annual Report of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's performance in meeting its mission.

GOAL 2.2. **To increase coordination of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation services with related services available to disabled individuals in other Federal, State and local programs.**

Rationale - Because of the variety of agencies charged with some role in the service system for disabled persons, difficulties have arisen in ensuring consistency and equitability of services. Areas of responsibility must be clarified and refined, including the interrelationship of funding sources. In this way, shrinking resources can be best directed without duplication or competition among service agencies.

Proposed Actions

2.2a Establish a task force to identify overlapping services and to enhance coordination among agencies.

2.2b Identify federal and state programs that serve as disincentives to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation meeting its mission of employing disabled persons and recommend changes to reduce disincentives.

GOAL 2.3. **To insure that rehabilitation personnel are provided opportunities for professional growth and development in order to effectively meet their responsibilities.**

Rationale - The vocational rehabilitation counselors are a key element in the rehabilitation process. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation management, administrative, professional counseling, and support staff provide a firm base for the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. Therefore, it is vitally important that the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff have updated, highly developed professional skills.

Proposed Actions

2.3a Improve coordination with universities on curriculum for vocational rehabilitation counselors.

2.3b Expand opportunities for vocational rehabilitation counseling internships.

2.3c Expand employment and promotional opportunities for vocational rehabilitation counseling graduates.

ISSUE 3. Expanding Ties to Business, Industry and Labor to Support Economic Development in New York State. The decade of the 1970's was a period of economic decline for New York State. The State lost population and new job generation was much below the national average. Major declines in employment in the manufacturing sector occurred with a loss of 439,000 jobs during the decade. While this decline was offset by increased employment in other industries, most notably service industries, it was clear that a major transformation was occurring in the State's economy.

Major initiatives are now underway at both the State and local levels of government to attract, retain and expand business and industry in order to support economic development in New York State. Under the direction of the Board of Regents, educational and cultural institutions are being encouraged to work more closely with the corporate sector and apply educational resources more directly to problems of expanding and reshaping the State's productive capacity, particularly in the area of advanced technology.

For disabled people, a strong State economy is of vital concern. Historically, periods of high unemployment have severely constricted employment opportunities for disabled people. Provision of needed support services is affected since resources are limited due to declines in the tax base. Needs of non-disabled people increase due to unemployment which requires additional commitment of public resources.

While vocational rehabilitation has no direct role in economic development, there are a number of areas where vocational rehabilitation can support and contribute to the State's economic growth, which in turn strengthens employment opportunities for disabled individuals. Vocational rehabilitation can support the development and expansion of training programs that develop skills for current and future jobs and which equip individuals to take advantage of the latest technologies. In spite of high unemployment, there is still a high demand for qualified, skilled workers in emerging occupations. Vocational rehabilitation can also expand its support and assistance to business and industry and employee unions on issues related to worker productivity. Productivity loss due to emotional problems, job

stress, alcohol and substance abuse is a major concern of business and industry, and employee assistance programs are rapidly expanding to prevent and/or help employees cope with such problems. Vocational rehabilitation professionals' knowledge, skills and capabilities in working with individuals with disabilities could be further expanded and applied in these areas. Vocational rehabilitation can also expand assistance to employers in complying with national and state laws and regulations in regards to nondiscrimination and employment of disabled persons. Current efforts are underway with a number of large corporations, and these initiatives might be expanded to include more businesses, particularly small businesses which are becoming more crucial to economic development in the State.

GOAL 3.1. **To strengthen employment opportunities for disabled individuals by providing support for, and contributing to, statewide economic development initiatives that attract, retain and expand business and industry in New York State.**

Rationale - Disabled individuals are both important consumers in, and contributors to, the economy of New York State. The vocational rehabilitation program indirectly advances economic development initiatives by encouraging the development of skill training programs, by improving worker productivity, by assisting employers in complying with mandates related to disabled workers, and by producing a resource of work-ready, rehabilitated persons. Expanding links between potential employers in business and industry, labor organizations and vocational rehabilitation programs would not only increase employment opportunities for disabled individuals, but would also strengthen the State's economy.

Proposed Actions

3.1a Involve the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation management staff in the process of state economic planning to further the issues and needs of persons with disabilities.

3.1b Increase incentives to employers for targeting jobs for the disabled workers.

3.1c Design "marketing" materials highlighting characteristics and contributions of disabled workers including productivity, quality, insurance "myths," stability, and other variables.

ISSUE 4. Expansion of Private and Voluntary Sectors' Participation in a Broad-Based State-Managed Service Delivery System. Private and voluntary sectors have long been instrumental in defining and making known needs of disabled individuals, and in promoting development of services to meet those needs. Any comprehensive and coordinated continuum of services for disabled persons must involve and draw upon the knowledge, commitment and expertise that exists in the private and voluntary sectors. Efforts must be devoted to strengthening the partnership of public, private and voluntary agencies to assure the availability and provision of services to persons with disabilities. Under State leadership, the participation of the private and voluntary sectors should be expanded to improve the availability and consistency of statewide programs and services. Specific activities should be directed towards developing new and strengthening existing ties, and fostering improved communication and consultation within all segments of a broad-based delivery system.

GOAL 4.1. **To improve the availability, consistency, and quality of services to disabled individuals by strengthening the partnership of public, private and voluntary agencies.**

Rationale - Private and voluntary agencies offer a unique expertise and perspective, in addition to vital services, that complement the public service delivery system for disabled persons. A true partnership of the public, private and voluntary sectors would help assure that services to the disabled population are comprehensive, accessible, consistent and of high quality. It would also broaden the avenues of input and commitment to statewide directions regarding persons with disabilities.

Proposed Actions

4.1a Support model projects in the private sector.

4.1b Provide reinforcement for successful private and voluntary programs.

4.1c Identify effective practices from non-public service providers that could be adopted by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation without duplication.

4.1d Provide mutual training of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff and private and voluntary agencies' staff on effective use of both sectors' resources.

ISSUE 5. Integration of the Needs of Disabled Persons in Those Services Delivered by Other Offices of the State Education Department. The educational and cultural institutions of New York State collectively comprise an entity known as The University of the State of New York. Those institutions include public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools; boards of cooperative educational services, public and independent colleges, universities and professional schools, public libraries and library systems, museums and historical societies; proprietary vocational schools; nursery schools; hospital nursing schools; public television stations; and public radio stations. The State Board of Regents, established in 1784, governs the University and appoints its President, who is also the Commissioner of Education. The mission of The University of the State of New York is twofold. That mission is, first, to provide to every resident of the State, regardless of age, sex, economic or social status, race, religion, national origin, language or disabling condition, the broadest possible range of high quality educational programs and services; and second, to serve the people and the government of the State in search for new knowledge and ways to apply it, in the preparation of a trained work force, and in the provision of services that draw upon the resources of the University.

As one of four major offices in the State Education Department, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is in a unique position of promoting and fostering the integration of services to disabled persons within the institutions in the University. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation acts as a catalyst and resource for total participation of disabled individuals including full accessibility to programs in elementary, secondary and higher education, and libraries and cultural institutions. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, working cooperatively with all offices of the State Education Department, plays a valuable role in linking educational programs and services with identified employment needs of persons with disabilities. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's knowledge and expertise in working with employers in the community provides a solid base for assisting education personnel in developing and implementing quality programs that improve education, cultural, and employment opportunities for disabled individuals. During the most recent year, over one-quarter of a million handicapped children were enrolled in the State's public school

system. This figure represents more than nine percent of total enrollment in public schools. The State Education Department's efforts are being directed toward the development of a comprehensive system of services that links special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation. A major issue currently being addressed is the "aging out" of youth from education programs and services to adult services. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be working cooperatively with other major offices in the State Education Department and with related state agencies to strengthen coordination of services during this transition period. Increased coordination and linking of these services will improve both educational and employment outcomes for disabled individuals. Through these efforts, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation can be an important technical assistance resource for linking institutions within the University, particularly in terms of expanding an awareness of the needs of disabled persons in New York State. The current project of the Board of Regents to review the long range goals of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation demonstrates a commitment to the continuation and strengthening of these cooperative efforts.

GOAL 5.1. **To improve services to disabled persons through the coordination of educational and cultural programs offered by the institutions of The University of the State of New York.**

Rationale - Close statewide coordination of education programs affecting persons with disabilities is necessary to achieve the stated mission of The University of the State of New York. The successful progression of a disabled individual through basic educational skills, vocational and occupational training, and vocational rehabilitation services to a productive independent life requires coordination of educational, cultural and employment programs. Policies and procedures of all educational and cultural institutions serving disabled persons should be linked through the State Education Department efforts.

Proposed Actions

5.1a Develop a comprehensive state plan for coordination of all educational/vocational rehabilitation services to disabled persons.

27

5.1b Design and implement operational strategies for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's involvement in secondary and post-secondary school programs.

5.1c Expand uses of public television and radio to deliver cultural, educational and entertainment programming to disabled persons.

5.1d Require career guidance and occupational education for all disabled students.

5.1e Promote life-long learning for persons with disabilities by offering training to allow disabled individuals to keep pace and/or advance on-the-job.

ISSUE 6. Reexamination of the Current Concentration of Programs and Resources.

The changing structure of services to disabled persons, most notably the move away from an institutional model to the development of community-based services, calls for a reexamination of the most effective alternatives for meeting their vocational and employment needs. Over the last 10-15 years, a large proportion of clients receiving vocational rehabilitation services were individuals who were returning to communities as part of New York State's deinstitutionalization effort. This population has reduced appreciably, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is no longer receiving the high levels of referrals in previous years. The reduction in these referrals is increasingly being offset by a rise in referrals of handicapped youth and young adults who are leaving school systems and transitioning to adulthood. Additional efforts and attention must be devoted to a recognition of this significant change, and its impact on potential changes that will be needed in the types of programs and services which are provided.

A growing area of need is career counseling and guidance for disabled youth and adults. Rapid changes in the labor market, particularly related to new and changing occupations that are emerging in response to technological change will require an increased sensitivity and knowledge of the needs of business and industry. In order to assure that disabled individuals are provided appropriate skill training to enable them to compete for new employment opportunities, more concentrated efforts will need to be undertaken to identify future labor market trends, and to work more closely with business and industry to define skills needed for new job openings.

GOAL 6.1. **To improve disabled individuals' ability to meet current and future employment openings by expanding knowledge of employment trends and by supporting services that address these trends.**

Rationale - Recent changes in the population in need of rehabilitation services and in the labor market dictate a reexamination of the focus of programs and resources. Technological advances, plus expansion

of the service industry, have opened new occupational fields to disabled persons. Additionally, the clientele in need has moved from a concentration of newly deinstitutionalized mentally disabled persons toward a more mainstreamed population coming through school systems. These trends must be assessed in order to assure that the vocational rehabilitation delivery system is responsive to these changes.

Proposed Actions

6.1a Study the "technological fit" between technology used by training providers and technology used by employers.

6.1b Provide pre-service and in-service training to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff to improve understanding and interpretation of current and future labor market trends.

6.1c Work with the Department of Labor to improve the information base on impact of employment trends on disabled individuals.

ISSUE 7. Development and Expansion of Independent Living Services. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established a new independent living services program as an adjunct to the vocational rehabilitation program. Independent living programs foster and promote the full participation of disabled individuals in society. The programs provide a variety of services including peer counseling, attendant care, equipment repair, housing referral, transportation and others. Independent living programs advocate for the needs of disabled persons in order to increase their accessibility and integration in society.

Independent living is a generic program, and can provide services and assistance to all disabilities. As initially conceived and implemented by federal law, state vocational rehabilitation agencies were given responsibility for independent living services. Independent living was viewed as an extension and support of the vocational rehabilitation program. Like vocational rehabilitation, independent living could provide, or arrange for, a variety of services for individuals with any disability that would assist them in achieving personal and economic independence. Because the provision of independent living services does not require an employment goal, assistance can be provided to individuals who are not eligible for vocational rehabilitation. For many, the provision of independent living services develops capacities and skills which enable them to enter vocational rehabilitation in pursuit of an employment outcome.

The Governor and Legislature have recognized the need for independent living services, and have authorized support through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for 19 centers throughout the State of New York. An important concern is that sufficient resources are made available to enable provision of quality services to all disabled people in need. Another concern is that independent living services are closely coordinated and integrated with vocational rehabilitation and other State programs for disabled persons.

GOAL 7.1. **To support and promote initiatives for full participation of disabled individuals in society by increasing their economic, personal, and social independence.**

Rationale - The vocational rehabilitation program requires that an eligible disabled person show potential for meeting a vocational objective. The Independent Living Program offers alternative services to disabled persons, regardless of vocational potential, who, through those services, can exercise more freedom of choice and control over their own lives, function independently in their communities and obtain or maintain employment. Unlike established service delivery systems for disabled persons, Independent Living Programs are based on a peer approach to service delivery and policy direction.

Proposed Actions

7.1a Identify Independent Living services that also enhance the employability of disabled individuals.

7.1b Analyze the extent to which independent living services increase accessibility and integration of disabled individuals in society.

ISSUE 8. Rehabilitation Models for Addressing Changing Needs of Populations Being Served. A review of programs and services for disabled persons must include consideration of new and innovative models for both addressing the changing needs of the populations being served as well as adapting to technological changes and advances in society as a whole. This effort could include: identifying new sources of referrals of disabled individuals to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; a review and examination of the role of the vocational rehabilitation counselor in the rehabilitation process; improving methods for projecting numbers and needs of youth and young adults as they move out of education programs with priority effort being directed at youth "aging out" of education programs and moving into adult services; expanding appropriate services for targeted populations such as disabled individuals with limited English proficiency, the learning disabled and older disabled persons; exploring and developing alternative methods for procuring support services that are necessary for an individual to maintain employment; supporting and developing specific skill training programs to enable disabled individuals to obtain employment in new and expanding technological fields; applying technology to meet the needs of disabled individuals through such fields as bioengineering and rehabilitation medicine; and exploring new and innovative ways of expanding the availability and provision of independent living services.

GOAL 8.1. **To increase knowledge and information on emerging trends in rehabilitation populations, services and priorities and to promote new approaches to address changing needs.**

Rationale - The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation must not only stay current with the state-of-the-art in rehabilitation but should also take the lead nationwide in exploring new service delivery methods for changing rehabilitation populations.

Proposed Actions

8.1a Assess the current number and needs of disabled persons.

8.1b Design follow-up studies to determine retention of benefits of vocational rehabilitation services.

8.1c Provide support for innovations in rehabilitation through universities, service providers, and other organizations, that address state priorities.

8.1d Coordinate rehabilitation research and training within New York State and with model programs in the nation.

8.1e Disseminate successful project results.

IV. SUMMARY

The draft discussion paper prepared for the Regents Project on Long-Range Goals and Policy Directions for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is intended to clarify and focus discussion on major issues affecting rehabilitation services in the State of New York. Conferences held throughout the State will enable a wide range of individuals, groups and organizations to sharpen and further refine these major areas of concern. Substantial participation will be welcomed in strengthening the proposed goal statements, and in identifying specific action steps and recommendations to make the goals a reality. After the Statewide conferences, all recommendations and suggestions will be reviewed with Advisory Council participation and will result in the development of an action plan for review and approval of the Board of Regents.

AGENDA

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Opening Remarks
9:30 a.m. - 10:CO a.m.	Panel Presentation
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Group Discussion

SITES	DATES	REGION COVERED
Buffalo Hilton 120 Church Street Buffalo, NY 12042	January 12, 1984 R.S.V.P. 12/30/83	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Yates Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara Orleans, Wyoming, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Erie, Seneca, Wayne
Sheraton Conference Center 200 Genesee Street Utica, NY 13502	January 24, 1984 R.S.V.P. 12/30/83	Hamilton, Herkimer, Madison, Lewis, Oneida, Fulton, Oswego, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Cayuga, Onondaga, Franklin
Holiday Inn - Arena 8 Hawley Street Binghamton, NY 13901	January 26, 1984 R.S.V.P. 12/30/83	Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins, Cortland, Sullivan
Sheraton Smithtown Inn 110 Vanderbilt Motor Parkway Smithtown, NY 11788	February 2, 1984 R.S.V.P. 1/11/83	Nassau, Suffolk
New York Penta (Statler) 7th Avenue & 33rd Street New York, NY 10001	February 3, 1984 R.S.V.P. 1/11/84	All Boroughs, Rockland Westchester
Albany Hilton Ten Eyck Plaza State and Lodge Streets Albany, NY 12207	February 10, 1984 R.S.V.P. 1/11/84	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Warren, Schenectady, Schoharie, Ulster, Washington, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Clinton, Essex

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____ Bus. Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

ADDRESS: _____ Title: _____

_____ Affiliation: _____

I WILL ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AT:

BINGHAMTON ☐ BUFFALO ☐

SMITHTOWN ☐ UTICA ☐

NEW YORK CITY ☐ ALBANY ☐

Check here if you will need interpreter services ☐